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APR 17 2017

PLANNING & ZONING DIVISION
Town of West Hartford, CT

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT
PLANNING DIVISION
TOWN OF WEST HARTFORD
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WEST HARTFORD, CT 06107-2431
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PERMIT APPLICATION FOR: (check one of the following)

☐ Lot Split ☒ Special Use Permit ☐ Site Plan
☐ Lot Line Revisions ☐ Subdivision ☐ Building Line

File #: 1307

Date Received: 4-17-17

Street Address of Proposed Application: 61 Raymond Road

Zone: _____ Acreage/Lot Area: _____ Parcel/Lot#: _____

Application Fee: \$450 Surcharge Fee: \$60 Affidavit Fee: \$20

Applicant's Interest in Property: Owner/operator of retail establishment to be located at said leased premises.

Brief Description of Proposed Activity: Indoor recreation/amusement facility consisting of three themed games,

each to be engaged by groups of 3-10 participants at a time.

The undersigned warrants the truth of all statements contained herein and in all supporting documents to the best of his/her knowledge and belief. Furthermore, the applicant agrees that submission of this document constitutes permission and consent to Commission and Staff inspections of the site. *Note: Notice is hereby given the Connecticut Department of Public Health must be notified by applicants for any project located within a public water supply aquifer protection area or watershed area. (CTDPH website at <http://www.dph.state.ct.us>)*

SOFTX - Blueback Square LP

Record Owner's Name

GS Memorial Rd

Street

West Hartford CT 06107

City State Zip

860-232-4800

Telephone #

Contact Person:

Ryan Knowles

Name

480 Pleasant Street, Suite 220B

Street

Watertown MA 02472

City State Zip

857-719-2770

Telephone #

ryan@skeleton-key.com

Email Address

Ray Weaver

Applicant's Name

480 Pleasant Street, Suite 220B

Street

Watertown MA 02472

City State Zip

617-733-2681

Telephone #

Ray Weaver

Applicant's Signature

Tim H. Carlsen

Signature of Owner/Authorized Agent
Operations Director



Project Narrative

This is a request for a Special Use Permit for Skeleton Key, to be located in the Blue Back Square center, with the SDD/CBDH zoning classification.

The application seeks approval for an indoor recreation/amusement facility to provide center visitors with an additional retail entertainment option that is not otherwise offered at Blue Back Square. The design calls for approximately 2600 square feet of space on a single story comprised of 3 multi-room games along with code compliant bathrooms, corridors, and ancillary employee/reception spaces.

The site for the special use permit is the leased space located at 61 Raymond Road in West Hartford, located on the parcel between New Street and Memorial Road. The property is parcel B190 of building B2 in the Blue Back Square center.



Summary

Skeleton Key is a new entertainment business developing a network of escape rooms at high value retail locations, initially in the Northeast. Each facility will house a rotating collection of three family-friendly games, each with a specific theme. The games will cost roughly \$30 and will last around an hour, catering to groups of friends, families, and company/corporate outings. The capacity for each game will typically be 3-8 persons, occasionally extending to 10 for private groups reserving an entire game. The capacity will be constrained by an online ticketing system whereby no more than 8 tickets can be sold for a given game at a given time.

Concept

Skeleton Key is part of an up-and-coming entertainment concept commonly known as an *escape room*.

An *escape room* is an immersive, live-action game, in which small groups of players work together in a themed environment against the clock to solve puzzles and overcome obstacles. In their most basic form, the objective is communicated within the name itself – players are tasked with escaping the room, and may have to solve puzzles such as combination locks, coded words or phrases, or logic puzzles to succeed. In more recent iterations, the rooms often have a theme, such as a Art Heist, Egyptian Tomb, or Viral Outbreak wherein the objective may be less focused on escaping, and more on the immersive completion of the problem presented by the theme (e.g. to “Steal the Painting” or “Break the Curse”).



Distinctives

Skeleton Key shares many characteristics with this description of an escape room, but it also has a number of differences:

- **HIGH VALUE LOCATIONS:** Skeleton Key is in a high-value retail center like Blue Back Square with the aim of offering an entertainment option with broad appeal. Skeleton Key will complement the already vibrant daytime and evening retail activity that exists at Blue Back Square, and will positively impact the center through offering a unique entertainment option relative to those businesses which are currently there.
- **HIGH END EXPERIENCE:** Skeleton Key has taken every detail of the experience into account, and will provide an experience that is polished, operationally consistent, and in line with the other establishments both at Blue Back Square, and more generally in West Hartford as a whole. We have invested substantial resources into technological developments such as props that will activate automatically upon puzzle completion, integrated audio/visual elements such as theme songs and sound effects, and set construction and design by theatrical professionals. These features contribute to a high level of production value that is carried from the lounge area through the gameplay spaces.
- **THOROUGH COMPLIANCE:** Skeleton Key is committed to following all applicable codes, zoning ordinances, and location-specific requirements so as to provide a safe environment that can be equally enjoyed by all customers. In addition, all game rooms will have clearly marked egress doors, and none of these doors will ever be locked – players are free to leave the room at any time, for any reason.



Gameplay Specifics

Our store will have 3 distinct games, each of which will be comprised of multiple rooms, and each of which will last for roughly one hour of gameplay. The puzzles within the games will be a combination of physical and mental challenges, and will have both analog and digital components (e.g. combination locks as well as RFID sensors). The games are, in brief outline:

- **SCARAB:** Customers will have to find a magical amulet that has been removed from the tomb of an Egyptian pharaoh, resulting in a curse being visited upon a local village. This game will have 2 rooms (Game B, Rooms 1-2), the first being outside the pyramid, the second inside.
- **STARRY NIGHT:** Customers are tasked with an art heist, namely stealing Van Gogh's *Starry Night* from a museum where it is on traveling display. This game will have 2 rooms (Game A, Rooms 1-2), the first being the exterior of the museum, and the second the interior of the museum's art gallery.
- **VIRUS:** Customers are in the midst of a viral outbreak that is occurring, and must band together to solve the mystery of the virus and create a vaccine before it is too late. This game will have 3 rooms (Game C Rooms 1-3), the first being a CDC command outpost, the second a field hospital, and the third a state-of-the-art laboratory.

Operations

- **HOURS:**
 - Monday – Thursday: 5PM – 11PM [Last game at 10PM]
 - Friday: 12PM – 12AM [Last game at 11PM]
 - Saturday: 10AM – 12AM [Last game at 11PM]
 - Sunday: 10AM – 11PM [Last game at 10PM]

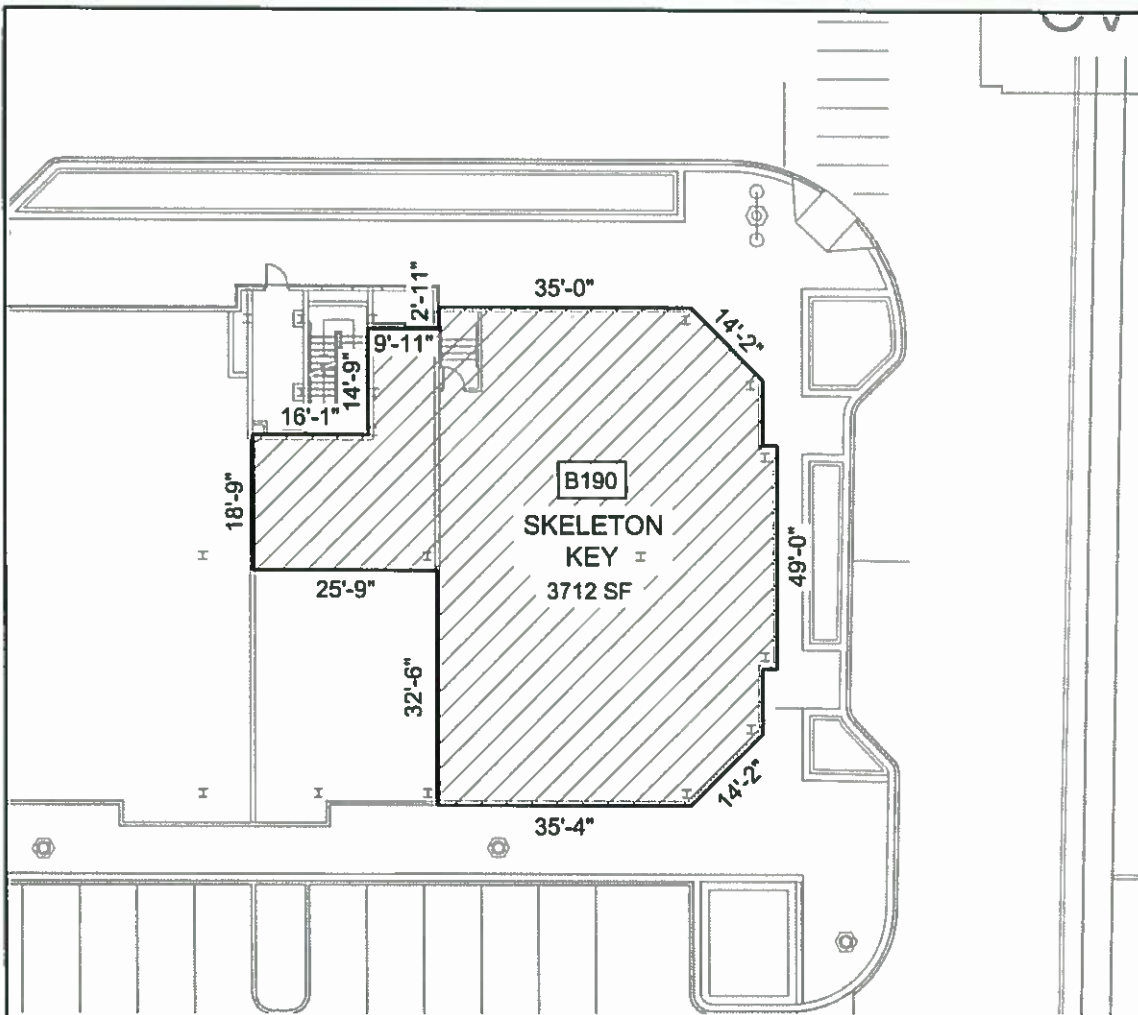


- STAFFING:
 - 1 Host/FOH – Will welcome customers, check them into existing reservations, sell tickets for walk-in customers, maintain common area.
 - 2 “Locksmiths” [1 will also be store manager] – Game supervisors who will bring groups of guests to gameplay areas, introduce game concepts and rules, and will monitor game progress via video/audio feeds in the Control Room [see floor plan]. Manager will also be responsible for store operations, customer requests/conflicts, and will be crowd-control certified.
- PEAK USAGE:
 - All games are constrained via ticketing to no more than 8 persons per room.
 - At times of peak demand, an application-based monitoring system would allow more than one team in a game at a time (i.e. Team A would progress to the second room of Scarab, and Team B could begin in the first).
 - With this in mind, the highest possible customer usage would be 56 persons in game rooms at once (7 total rooms x 8 people), with the possibility of 2 groups waiting to begin in the common area, raising the total to 72 persons in the total retail space.
- TRASH STATEMENT:
 - Blue Back Square provides trash/refuse removal for tenants.
 - From the tenant handbook: “Retail tenants will haul trash to the loading area via the service corridor...separation of trash is as follows: wet/dry, cardboard, glass/metal/plastics, and grease. Compactors will be provided for wet/dry trash and cardboard.
 - Anticipated trash needs for Skeleton Key are minimal, confined mostly to customer refuse and some paper/cardboard. Food/Drink is not permitted in any of the game play spaces.

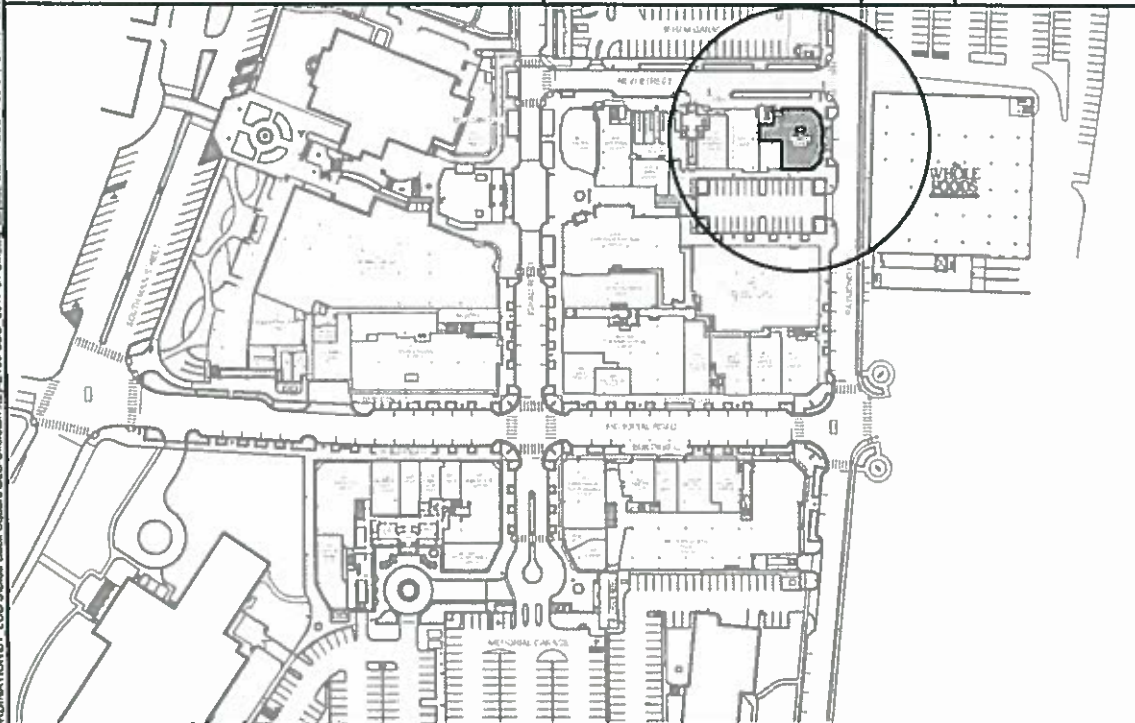


Conclusion

Skeleton Key will be an excellent exemplar of an existing concept, and will greatly benefit the West Hartford community through offering a hands-on, immersive entertainment option in the existing central business district of Blue Back Square. Our indoor recreation/amusement approval will allow for local groups of friends, families, and co-workers to gather for enjoyable entertainment outings, as well as draw visitors and interest from the surrounding communities for the same.



PROPERTY: BLUE BACK SQUARE 65 Memorial Road, West Hartford, CT 06107	TENANT: SKELETON KEY	SPACE NO.: B190	0 10 20 SCALE: 1"=20'-0"
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	NOTE: LANDLORD CANNOT GUARANTEE THAT NO INTERNAL CHANGES HAVE BEEN MADE SINCE THESE DRAWINGS WERE DEVELOPED. IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE SPACE BE FIELD SURVEYED TO VERIFY ACCURACY OF THESE DRAWINGS. FAILURE TO VERIFY ACTUAL CONDITIONS SHALL BE AT SOLE RISK AND RESPONSIBILITY OF THE TENANT.	TENANT APPROVAL:	SRP LEASING APPROVAL: JONATHAN KAPLAN	DRAWN BY: EB
		PLAN: SITE PLAN		DATE: 01/26/17
				EXHIBIT NO.: LOD

Drawing: RAVENANT COORDINATION01 LOD'S Blue Back Square B190-Skeleton Key-B190-LOD 2017-01-26.dwg Layout: 8.5x11 LOD Feb 01, 2017 1:25pm



Addendum

The shaded portion (~1100 sq. ft.) of the floor plan represents Deadbolt, which is a restaurant that will be opening simultaneously with Skeleton Key in the adjoining space. There will be an internal pass-through between the spaces, but otherwise the two are distinct businesses. No food or drink from Deadbolt will be permitted in Skeleton Key in any form, including in the lounge/common area with the pass-through.